

Press Release

Inter-American Court of Human Rights

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I/A Court H.R.
Protecting Rights



Ministry of Foreign Affairs
and Foreign Trade
BARBADOS

BARBADOS WELCOMES INTER-AMERICAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS: STRENGTHENING HUMAN RIGHTS DIALOGUE



Bridgetown, Barbados, April 22, 2024. - Today, the Opening Ceremony of the 166th Regular Session of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACtHR) was held at The University of the West Indies at Cave Hill, Barbados. The event marks the beginning of a week of activities in the Caribbean country aimed at establishing a dialogue between the Court and the international community regarding human rights and the climate crisis.

The 166th Session takes the form of a Public Hearing in the matter of the request for an Advisory Opinion on the climate emergency and human rights that has been put to the Court. This Advisory Opinion is one of the most participatory international judicial processes in the world related to climate change.

The Government of Barbados readily accepted the proposal by the Court to host the Session, as it remains fully cognisant of the deleterious impacts of the climate crisis on small, vulnerable countries and regions. In turn, the IACtHR believes in conducting public hearings outside of its headquarters in Costa Rica to witness first-hand the realities faced by the regions most affected by the topic at hand.

During the opening session, Barbados' Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, and Senior Minister coordinating the Productive Sector, Kerrie D. Symmonds, M.P. stated: "*Barbados has sought to appeal to the conscience of the globe, so as to achieve an appreciation and, hopefully,*

a common understanding of the need for our international financial architecture to be reconfigured so as to better serve and better respond to the financial and societal challenges confronting small states as a result of the climate emergency."

"When we have spoken to these issues, we have done so, almost exclusively via diplomatic and moral exchanges in the name of climate justice. These hearings will now take us a step further by interrogating, evaluating and establishing the legal obligations which are attendant upon the climate emergency and its consequences for the multiple millions of people whose lives and livelihoods are being threatened and, in some cases, decimated."

President of the Inter-American Court, Judge Nancy Hernández López, in her remarks thanked the Barbadian government for opening its doors to the Court and highlighted the importance of the Advisory Opinion, *"we will be able to analyze the scope of the climate emergency and drive out any doubts for those who still consider the climate crisis a "defamation" or a controversial issue that lacks scientific backup. This advisory opinion has allowed historic participation from civil society, receiving 265 amicus curiae briefs and over 600 contributions from various delegations. Proving the legitimacy of the Court in working relevant juridical issues with direct impact in the region"*.

Among the local dignitaries participating in the event were the President of Barbados, Her Excellency The Most Honourable Dame Sandra Mason, FB, GCMG, D.A., Q.C., LLD; Prime Minister of Barbados, The Honourable Mia Amor Mottley, S.C., M.P.; Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs, and Senior Minister coordinating Governance Policy, The Honourable Dale D. Marshal, S.C, M.P.; and Senior Appellate Judge, Justice Francis Belle.

During its visit to Barbados, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights will also hold an International Seminar related to the **"Impact and Challenges of International Human Rights Law"**.

Visit the Inter-American Court's [website](#) for more information on the 166th Regular Session held in Barbados.

To watch the Opening Ceremony please click [here](#). **(IACtHR/ MFAFT)**